

quently, his chief interest lay in literature and art, politics came afterwards; but so far as he concerned himself in them his opinions were essentially democratic. In all respects Edmond de Goncourt's assertions were erroneous. If Zola had cared to sell his pen for political purposes he might have done so with the greatest ease. In 1868-1869, when he first began to give real attention to politics, the authorities were only too anxious to secure clever men who might reply to Eochefort and all the other opposition writers. Large sums were spent in bribing journalists. Villemessant was paid ten thousand pounds to shake off Eochefort and support the authorities; Emile de Girardin was bought with the promise of a senatorship; Clement Duvernois was secured by being placed at the head of a new journal, "Le Peuple Français," on which the Privy-purse, in little more than one year, expended over fifty-six thousand pounds.¹ More money was spent on other journals, new ones like "L'Etendard," for which Auguste Yitu (one of the original characters of Murger's "Vie de Bohème") was engaged; "Le Public," whose editor, Ernest Drdolle, was financed; and "L'Epoque," whose nominal proprietor was Dusautoy, the Emperor's tailor. For these and other newspapers contributors were

required, and a
good many clever but needy men of lax
principles pre-
sented themselves. The less brazen among
them found
their excuse in the pretended transformation of
the *regime* ;
they would never have served the "personal
Empire " — of
course not! — but the "liberal Empire"
commanded their
sympathies.

¹ "Papiers et Correspondance de la Farnille Imperiale,"
Paris, Impri-
merie Rationale, 1870.